DOCTOR STRANGE®

MARVEL

#24

STEPHEN STRANGE was a preeminent surgeon until a car accident damaged the nerves in his hands. His ego drove him to scour the globe for a miracle cure, but instead he found a mysterious wizard called the ANCIENT ONE who taught him magic and that there are things in this world bigger than himself. These lessons led Stephen to become the Sorcerer Supreme, Earth's first defense against all manner of magical threats. His patients call him...

DOCTOR STRANGE

A Cosmic Cube transformed Captain America into the ultimate Hydra sleeper agent – and the country is now under Hydra Control. Hydra trapped Manhattan in the Darkforce Dome and put Baron Mordo in charge on the inside. Doctor Strange, Spider-Woman, reporter Ben Urich and unexpected ally Wilson Fisk, former Kingpin of Crime, have united in order to free the city. Armed with powerful magical artifacts suited to their own strengths, our heroes prepare to clash with the magical titan as the fate of the city hangs in the balance...

WRITER
DENNIS HOPELESS

ARTIST & COLORIST
NIKO HENRICHON

LETTERS
VC'S CORY PETIT

COVER
NIKO HENRICHON

ASSISTANT EDITOR
ALLISON STOCK

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
DARREN SHAN

EDITOR
NICK LOWE

EDITOR IN CHIEF
AXEL ALONSO

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER
JOE QUESADA

PRESIDENT
DAN BUCKLEY

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
ALAN FINE

DOCTOR STRANGE CREATED BY **STAN LEE AND STEVE DITKO**

© 2017 Marvel Characters, Inc. All rights reserved. All characters featured in this issue and the distinctive names and likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of Marvel Characters, Inc. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. WWW.MARVEL.COM

I'LL BE HONEST, THE SCANT FEW CARDS LEFT UP THESE SLEEVES ARE HARDLY ACES.

BUT SORCERY ISN'T ALWAYS A *FIREFIGHT.*

CONDUCTED CORRECTLY, GREAT MAGIC CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS A SONG.

AND WHILE MY RAGTAG BAND OF NEOPHYTES--

--MIGHT BE WELL OUTMATCHED--

--I CAN STILL HEAR OUR BATTLE HYMN--

--RIDING IN ON THE WESTERN WIND.

OUR PATH TO VICTORY, FAINT BUT CLEAR.

SO LONG AS WE HIT ALL THE RIGHT *NOTES.*

SPIDER-WOMAN, AN OPENING SALVO, IF YOU PLEASE.

OH. MY PLEASURE, DOC.

THERE'S NOTHING QUITE AS EXHILARATING AS FLYING A GUN RUN--

BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA

--IN A ZOMBIE AIRPLANE WITH NO ROOF.

AH. THAT BITTERSWEET MOMENT WHEN YOU REALIZE--

--YOUR EPIC CLIMACTIC BATTLE WITH THE GREAT SORCERER SUPREME--

--MIGHT BE A ROUT.

DOCTOR STRANGE IS TRYING TO SHOOT ME.

WITH BULLETS.

GREAT BEASTIES OF THE DARKFORCE, REACH OUT YOUR HANDS--

--AND *SWAT THESE GNATS.*

GREEEAAT.

URICH!

YOU'RE UP.

AYE!

THE GANGRENOUS HORDE APPROACHES.

LET MY LUMINOUS BLADE LIGHT THE WAY--

--STRAIGHT THROUGH THIS ABOMINABLE ARMY OF ROT--

--AND OUT THE OTHER--

--SIIIDE!

FISK. NOW.

YOU CAN'T KILL THOSE THINGS WITH ADJECTIVES, NEWSMAN.

PUT YOUR MIGHTY PEN AWAY.

STICK TO THE SWORD.

POINT TAKEN.

REAAAK.

THOUGH I MUST ADMIT, THE BLUSTER IS HALF THE FUN.

DON'T I KNOW IT.

YES. YES. PERFECT.

EVERYTHING IS GOING EXACTLY AS--

--PLANNED.

KRA-KOOOOM

FISK!

WHAT IN THE MOLTEN PITS OF DOOM WAS *THAT*?!

SOME SORT OF LASER-BREATHING SPHINCTER CRAB.

BUT DON'T YOU WORRY.

I'LL MURDER IT.

SO.

MUCH AS I ENJOY A ROUSING ROUND OF HIDE-AND-GO DEATH SERPENT...

...CAN WE MAYBE SWITCH GEARS SOMETIME SOON?

JUST KEEP CIRCLING THE SANCTUM, JESS.

YOU'RE DOING GREAT.

I SEE WHAT'S GOING ON HERE.

YOU KNOW, ANYTIME I ASK YOU A QUESTION--

THE ANSWER COMPELS YOU TO PUNCH MY FACE.

I KNOW. YOU'VE MENTIONED.

STRANGE HAS JUICED UP A FEW MAGICAL MARIONETTES AND KEEPS THEM DANCING IN FRONT OF ME.

EVEN STRIPPED OF HIS CONSIDERABLE GIFTS, DOCTOR STRANGE SCHEMES ANEW.

WHAT IS IT YOU'RE PLANNING, OLD FOE?

AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I IGNORE THE PUPPETS...

"...AND CLIP *YOUR* STRINGS?"

GOODNESS.

TOOOSH

HEH.

GOSH, I LOVE WINNING.

NNNNGG...

...WILDLY UNPLEASANT.

BE ON YOUR TOES, EVERYONE.

MORDO'S FOUND MY PERCH.

I SUSPECT THINGS ARE ABOUT TO TAKE A TURN.

WHAAAT?!

THE MAN IS FUNCTIONALLY *POWERLESS!*

HOW IN THE HELL DID HE SURVIVE THAT?!

KREESH

YOU KNOW WHAT? NO.

WE MUSTN'T DWELL.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

...KILL THE IDIOT WITH ANCIENT, EVIL SPACE FIRE!

...

FOOOOOM

NAILED IT!

ORDER A IS NOW COMPLETE, TEAM.

THIS IS OUR WINDOW.

JUST *DIE*, YOU INSUFFERABLE *GARBAGE DWELLER!*

COMMENCE WITH *ORDER B.*

BEHOLD!

MY MIGHTY!

BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA

MACHINE GUN.

IT'S A BIG, DUMB MACHINE GUN THAT SHOOTS GHOST BULLETS.

BY THE WORMY RINGS OF THE REMATOD!

BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA

SHE'S NEARLY PIERCING OUR DEFENSES!

THEY'VE BEEN HOLDING BACK!

YOUR DANCE IS DONE, PUPPET!

DOC! HE'S GOT ME!

LOOK, YOU WIN. I SURRENDER. WHATEVER.

JUST, PLEASE DON'T MAKE SOME CHESS QUEEN JOKE RIGHT NOW.

I CAN ONLY TAKE SO MUCH.

NOT TO WORRY, SPIDER-WOMAN!

KROOM

CRASH

THE TIME FOR METAPHORS IS *THROUGH!*

OH, THE MANY YEARS I'VE WAITED TO HEAR YOU SPEAK THOSE WORDS, MORDO.

NOW, SHALL WE END THIS?

YOUR AWESOME STOCKPILE OF MAGIC...

...VERSUS MY CAREFULLY HONED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE?

I KNEW IT, STRANGE!

I *KNEW* YOU HAD POWER SQUIRRELED AWAY.

I KNEW YOU WERE PLAYING POSSUM.

BUT IT WON'T BE ENOUGH!

THERE ARE MANY PATHS TO SUCCESS IN BATTLE.

I'M FAR TOO MUCH, EVEN FOR *YOU!*

GRIT.

CUNNING.

EVEN COWARDICE, WHEN EMPLOYED CORRECTLY.

FIREPOWER-- THAT'S MORDO'S GAME.

HE KNOWS *I* CAN'T GO TOE-TO-TOE.

HE TRUSTS I'LL CAVE IN THE END...

...AND HE'S NOT WRONG.

WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY I HAVE NO INTENTION OF WINNING THIS BATTLE.

TODAY FOR ME--

--WAS ALWAYS ABOUT WINNING A WAR.

AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THAT.

STRATEGY.

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!

AN ILLUSION.

NO ONE WAS GOING TO DEFEAT YOU FROM THE GROUND.

NOT WHILE YOU HELD THE SANCTUM.

I HAD TO COMPEL YOU TO GATHER UP YOUR MINDLESS BEASTIES AND ILL-GOTTEN SPELLS--

--AND LEAVE MY HOUSE.

BUT YOU WERE...THAT DOESN'T...I DON'T...

HOW?!

TEN MINUTES AGO.

SMOKE AND MIRRORS, MOSTLY.

GOOD LUCK, DOC.

AS I MENTIONED BEFORE, THERE ARE NO ACES LEFT UP MY SLEEVES.

BUT ASTRAL PROJECTION AS A DECOY IS MORE LIKE A 4 OF DIAMONDS.

THANKS FOR THE LIFT, OLD FRIEND.

IF THIS THING TURNS OUR WAY...

...I WILL MOST *CERTAINLY* OWE YOU ONE.

NOW.

IT DOESN'T MATTER!

LOOK AROUND! ***THE DARKFORCE DOME*** REMAINS! NEW YORK CITY IS STILL TRAPPED.

YOU HAVEN'T BEATEN ***ANYONE!***

SURE SEEMS LIKE WE BEAT YOU.

NO...

AND, WHAT'S WORSE...YOU NEVER SAW IT COMING.

THAT WAS JUST SIMPLE ROPE-A-DOPE, BARON.

CAN'T BELIEVE YOU FELL FOR IT.

PONNK

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

MORDO IS DOWN FOR THE COUNT.

YEAH. SO WHY'S THE DAMN *DOME* STILL UP?

BARON MORDO *NEVER* CONTROLLED THE DARKFORCE DOME. AS MUCH AS HE LOVED TO CALL HIMSELF KING... I KNOW A TRUMPED-UP PAWN WHEN I SEE ONE.

AND... *THERE'S* THE CHESS.

CAPTAIN AMERICA GAVE THE MAN A PILE OF STOLEN MAGIC AND TOLD HIM TO MAKE A LOT OF NOISE. HE WAS JUST A DANGEROUS DISTRACTION TO KEEP US RUNNING ABOUT.

SURE, BUT NOW YOU HAVE YOUR MOJO BACK.

CAN'T YOU JUST POP INTO THE LIBRARY AND CONJURE UP SOME SORT OF *DOME-AWAY* SPELL?

WE SHALL SEE.

IN THE MEANTIME, WOULD SOMEONE KEEP AN EYE ON THIS FOR ME?

PLNNK

WHERE DO YOU THINK HE'S GOING?

TO FETCH HIS DICE BAG AND ROLL FOR WISDOM.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

JESSICA... ENOUGH ALREADY.

ALSO, THAT'S NOT EVEN HOW THAT WORKS.

NEXT ISSUE:

Send letters to MHEROES@MARVEL.COM or 135 W 50th St, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10020 (Please mark "OKAY TO PRINT")

ZONE